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TEGUCIGALPA, HONDURAS
FAMILY CLAIMS CIA INVOLVED IN PRIEST'S INTERROGATION
BY NOE LEIVA

The family of an American priest reported dead in Honduras cited a human rights report claiming that CIA and U.S. military personnel may have participated in the cleric's interrogation.

Joseph Connolly, brother-in-law of Jesuit priest James F. Carney, who has not been seen since he entered eastern Honduras last July with a band of 98 rebels, told United Press International Thursday the family believes Carney was arrested by Honduran soldiers along with guerrilla leader Jose Reyes Mata.

Honduran authorities originally said captured rebels told them Carney, also known as Father Guadalupe, died of starvation along with 13 guerrillas. None of the bodies has been found.

Carney's family claim he was taken to El Aguacate, a Honduran military base built with U.S. help, located about 108 miles northeast of Tegucigalpa in Olancho province where the band of rebels was pursued last summer and fall.

"We have received information from three sources that Father Guadalupe was a prisoner in El Aguacate," Connolly said.

In a January letter to President Reagan, received by UPI Thursday, the family said the Christian Human Rights Commission of Honduras "state in their communique that the CIA and U.S. military were directly present and participated in the interrogation."

"We want to bring to your attention the fact that U.S. forces might have been engaged illegally in the capture, torture and death of our family member, Father James Carney," the letter to Reagan stated.

Following the report that Reyes Mata had been captured, the Honduran military said he died in a battle and later produced his photograph.

Connolly said he believed Carney had traveled with the rebel band into Honduras. Carney was expelled from Honduras for "subversive" activities in 1976 and had been living in Nicaragua.

The letter to Reagan, signed by Connolly, his wife, Eileen, and the priest's sisters, Virginia Carney Smith and Maureen Carney, urged the president to help them arrange interviews with CIA members as well as top U.S. and Honduran military officials.

Connolly said they would meet with U.S. Ambassador John D. Negroponte on Monday and that Honduran army chief, Gen. Gustavo Alvarez, might agree to meet them if they submit their questions beforehand.